

Non-Engagement Audit Learning Briefing

Background

Brighton and Hove safeguarding Adults Board Non-Engagement audit was undertaken to help determine how the learning from [SAR X, published in 2017](#), has been embedded in practice locally. The audit reviewed people identified as self-neglecting and not considered to be engaging in support offered by both statutory and non-statutory agencies. The adults in the cases audited largely lived independently and faced a range of significant risks that included fires at home, falls, personal care and environmental issues, hypothermia, physical abuse, malnutrition, and sepsis.

Characteristics of three exemplary cases

The audit identified three cases with exemplary professional practice where professionals across different agencies worked closely, flexibly and with a high level of dedication and oversight.

A creative and person-centred approach was used to provide an adult with photographic records of their hoarded belongings while they were accommodated elsewhere to allow repairs to be completed.

A social worker communicated with respect using a strength's-based approach with an adult living in a concerning home environment, finding a way to reduce the risks in line with the adult's wishes; hoarded food was moved to sealed containers in the bath

A social worker drew upon the wider network around an adult to triangulate information and gain a fuller picture of the person's lived experience, for example checking with the local shop as to whether the adult could in fact walk there to buy food.

A mental capacity assessment was undertaken to enable agencies to assess the executive capacity of an adult with a mental health disorder who demonstrated they knew the risks and steps required but couldn't put these into practice.

Providing the hospital inpatient team with the name of the social worker at the point the adult was admitted, was key to enabling the hospital staff to contact the social worker and have a full picture and good discharge planning.

Three things you can do

Create robust shared plans with small measurable targets

- ✓ Use the self-neglect section in the Sussex Safeguarding Adult Procedures for guidance and structure for your planning.
- ✓ Invite all multi-agency professionals involved in supporting the person and record discussions, agreed actions and who is responsible along with timescales. Consider capacity and fluctuations in this, with reviews as necessary.
- ✓ Multi-agency assessment of risk and the impact of any proposed changes in service provision.
- ✓ Ensure the GP is involved in planning and kept informed of changes, risks, and progress.

Understand the triggers to non-engagement

- ✓ Who has information about the adult to help create an accurate picture of the adult's lived experience and could support with communication and/or relationship building?
- ✓ Is there any previous experience of trauma that might lie behind difficulties engaging with support?
- ✓ Is therapeutic intervention needed to address previous trauma and support change?
- ✓ Be flexible and open-minded in your approach and attitude and be prepared to think the unthinkable and believe the unbelievable.

Use respectful strengths-based communication

- ✓ Show respect for the adult's choices and belongings, however unusual or extreme the situation or the environment.
- ✓ Focus on communication skills and the importance of consistency across speech, tone, and body language in being non-judgemental whilst holding particularly difficult and challenging conversations.
- ✓ Be patient and build the adult's trust and keep their rights, views, choices, and preferred outcomes at the centre of your involvement.
- ✓ Consider the gradual implementation of practical tasks and activities to reduce risk, such as decluttering or cleaning.



Team Discussion Points

Have you been able to adapt how a service is offered or provided before? How did you manage this and what did you learn from this?

Have you been able to make use of time an adult spends in an alternative setting, such as a hospital, to progress the situation, such as a mental capacity assessment? This could be useful for example when an adult is substance affected and completing an assessment has proved difficult.

How could you help someone to reduce the risks of food hoarding?

How could you appropriately involve a close neighbour or friend in discussions to support improved engagement and/or positive steps to reduce risks?

How could you maintain a person-centred approach?

Which agencies to contact?

Consult the safeguarding leads at:

- CCG for concerns relating clinical /medical or nursing care.
- University Hospitals Sussex for concerns relating to inpatient settings.
- SPFT for mental health concerns.
- The Practice Manager of the adult's GP surgery to involve the GP or keep them informed.
- Sussex Police for cases where there is suspected or known criminal acts.
- Trading Standards for concerns relating to scams.

Further information and useful links

[Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

[SAR X – Final Publication April 2017](#)

[SAR X Professionals Briefing](#)

[Sussex Multi-Agency Procedures to Support Adults who Self-Neglect](#)

[Updated Self-Neglect Chapter Briefing, March 2019](#)

[Research in Practice: self-neglect](#)

[Personality Disorder – Basic Awareness](#)

[Making safeguarding Personal – toolkit for responses \(Local Government Association, 2015\)](#)

[MCA Audit Learning Briefing](#)

[Information Sharing Guide and Protocol](#)

[ESSAB Self-Neglect Audit Learning Briefing](#)

[Brighton and Hove Learning Gateway](#)

For more information about this audit

Contact: BHSAB@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Concerned about an adult? Contact:

Brighton and Hove: Tel: 01273 295555

Concerned about a child? Contact:

Brighton and Hove: Tel:01273 295555

For urgent mental health concerns:

Telephone numbers for urgent out of hours clinical referrals are listed on [SPFT web site](#)